

March 23, 2007

MEMORANDUM

To: ALFA Survey Principal Investigators

From: R. L. Brown

Subject: Scheduling the Surveys in the Post-Senior Review Era

As you know, it is the NAIC plan to make substantial changes in the science operations model of the Arecibo Observatory in response to the recommendations of the NSF Astronomy senior review. Among these changes are a reduction in the number of observing hours for astronomy each year, a reduction in the number of receivers available for astronomy programs, a partial restriction of astronomy programs to nighttime observing hours, an 80/20 scheduling preference given to the survey programs, and an increase in the days each week the telescope is scheduled for maintenance activities. All this is being done to restructure the scope of Observatory tasks to the smaller workforce available to accomplish those tasks. These changes will go into effect following completion of the platform painting project late in the second quarter of calendar year 2007.

Further, completion of the new PALFA and EALFA spectrometers will mean that the survey programs and their commensal partners will all be able to proceed as planned when the telescope resumes service following the painting project. With this in mind, and recognizing that nearly all of the survey programs request several hundred observing hours per year continuing for several years, we are in the process of creating a "template" telescope schedule to be used with appropriate modifications for the next several years. This work is being informed by the three NAIC scientists with responsibility for the PALFA, EALFA and GALFA survey programs respectively,

- PALFA: Paulo Freire
- EALFA: Emmanuel Momjian
- GALFA: Steven Gibson

and by representatives of the Observatory scheduling committee. The effort is being led by Murray Lewis, the head of astronomy. Once the template schedule is complete we will share it with you seeking your suggestions and criticism. An iterative revision cycle will, hopefully, lead rapidly to convergence. Final approval of the telescope schedule, every telescope schedule, is the responsibility of Bob Kerr, the Observatory director.

In the process of creating the template schedule, and in creating all "real" telescope schedules, it is important that all of us recognize that the role of the PALFA, EALFA and GALFA responsible scientists is to answer any specific questions from the telescope scheduling committee, the telescope scheduler, or the Observatory director. The responsible scientists are not advocates for the survey programs. They are an information resource for the Observatory. As needed, they will contact you for guidance on specific questions. Your concerns, comments, or complements, on matters related to telescope scheduling should be addressed directly to Bob Kerr.